



Case mate

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Photo by Patricia Radcliffe

Hannah Hendricks joins other middle schoolers at the Monroe Community Activities Center in a Christmas craft project to benefit nearby Riverside Convalescent Home. To learn more, and to view other photos of holiday activities around post, see pages 10 and 11.

'Take flu shots seriously,' says post clinic official

BY PATRICK BUFFETT
CASEMATE STAFF WRITER

This year's flu season could be the "worst in 30 years," according to reports by local and national news media.

The MSNBC website this week alluded to warnings by health officials that "this could be an especially bad flu season nationwide, with some parts of the country — particularly Colorado, Texas and Nevada — hit hard a month earlier than usual."

The bottom line, according to the bevy of medical experts appearing on nightly news programs and morning talk shows of late, is that the public needs to be diligent in getting flu shots, and getting them soon.

"Obviously, there is a great deal of concern," said Sgt. 1st Class Baxter Morrison, NCOIC of Craven Army Health Clinic here. "And while I would hesitate to report too strong of an article that would maybe cause a panic, I can say with certainty that we've had flu cases at Fort Eustis, Fort Lee and Portsmouth Naval (Hospital) where personnel had to be hospitalized."

Concerned about patient privacy regulations, Morrison wouldn't offer specifics about those who were hospitalized locally; however, he said their plight should provide sufficient reason to take flu shot warnings seriously.

"The possible consequences of

putting off the flu shot are serious sickness, loss of work time, hospitalization and, as we're seeing in places like Colorado, death," Morrison said. "So, a one-time, three-second shot can save someone a lot of trouble and sick time later on."

Children and the elderly are being hit especially hard by this year's flu strain, according to media reports. Caretakers of children and health care workers are also among those who are most susceptible, and who are being strongly encouraged to get the flu vaccine.

"Once someone is sick, the flu shot is not recommended at that time," Morrison said. "If the person gets over a little cold or sniffles they can come in then."

The cutoff date for flu shots is Feb. 29, Morrison also cautioned. After that, it will take a doctor's order to be vaccinated. "The reason is basically that the flu strain begins to combat the current serum, and a new strain will begin, which will prompt next year's new strain serum. It's a vicious cycle."

It should also be noted that it only takes 10 to 14 days to produce immunity after a vaccine.

At Craven, flu shots are now being administered on a walk-in basis at the immunization clinic adjacent to the records area on the second floor. Flu shots are given Monday, Wednesday and Friday during normal operating hours — 7:30 to 11:30 a.m., and 1 to 4 p.m.

Conditional promotions suspended across Army

BY SPC. BILL PUTNAM
ARMY NEWS SERVICE

WASHINGTON — All conditional promotions Armywide from sergeant to sergeant first class will be suspended until further notice after Jan. 1.

The new policy, dated Nov. 21, states that Soldiers must graduate from their respective non-commissioned officer education school before

being considered for promotion. Sergeants must graduate from Primary Leadership Development Course to be considered for staff sergeant; staff sergeants must graduate from the Basic Non-commissioned Officer Course to be considered for sergeant first class; and sergeants first class must graduate from the Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Course for consideration to master sergeant.

"We always figured it would stop," Sgt. Maj. Julian Edmondson, the personnel policy integrator at the Pentagon's G-1 staff, said of the policy. "It's hard enough to manage during peacetime. With a war it was a nightmare."

Currently there are 36,641 Soldiers waiting for seats in the Army's various Noncommissioned Officer Education System schools, said

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team up for fitness
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Commentary

Chaplain's corner

Instructions vital before putting yourself together

If there is one thing I'm not fond of when it comes to getting gifts, it is getting those that come with lots of instructions. You know what I mean, don't you? The kind of gift I'm referring to is the one that when you open the box, you see a bunch of screws in a little plastic bag. That is the first turn off for me. I may like the gift, but I must admit when it comes to putting things together, I'm not the one you want to call on for help.

Now, my wife is good at putting things together. She has the patience of Job when it comes to putting a computer together. I just stand there and watch and hand her whatever she needs. The one thing I noticed about her is that she always asks for the instructions that came with the item.

This reminds me that during this Christmas season, we need instructions on how to fix our lives as we celebrate the birth of Christ. We need to read the instructions and learn more about what it is that needs fixing in our lives.

It is easy and good to see Christmas as this time of the year for giving and receiving gifts. But, the most important gift you can receive

during this Christmas season is to read God's instructions and apply what has been written to your life.

Here are some reasons why it is important to read the instructions.

First, we need to read God's instructions because the world can be a cruel and dark place in which to live. Regardless of the season, there is unrest all over the world, and we need a safe haven to run to for help. It is best to have a guide to help show us the way, especially when life seems to fall apart at the seams. Psalm 119:105 reads, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." God's word helps us during the dark days of life. The instructions God gives to us will be like a lamp in the darkness.

In these days of uncertainty, we all need help. And, the only one who can help us put things together the way they ought to be, is God. The instructions God has provided for us will guide us into all truth. They will guide us in the truth about ourselves, and they will guide us in the truth about the world. God's instructions help us when life comes at a high rate of speed. We need the instructions to show us how to slow the pace down. When

our lives have been torn and ripped apart because of sins, the instructions show us how to get on the right path so that we can be useful to God and our fellow man.

Second, we need to read God's instructions to help us to know the truth about ourselves. Psalm 119:11 reads, "Your word I have hidden in my heart that I might not sin against you." God's instructions not only help by providing a lamp to our feet, and showing us where to walk, they also help us identify those sins in our heart that we are more prone to commit. By reading and studying God's instructions, we are more aware of the things that will destroy our fellowship with God. Sin is the one thing that can disrupt intimacy with God.

Third, God's instructions will give you direction for daily living. Psalm 32:8 reads, "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with mine eye." Can you imagine God having one eye and with it he sees the entire world? There is nothing hidden from his sight. What an awesome thought to know that no matter where we are in the world and what we are doing, we



Chaplain (Maj.) Wilbert Harrison
Post Chaplain

are watched and cared for by a God who loves us and knows our needs.

As we celebrate the holiday season with all its festivities, let us not forget the God who made this all possible. Let us rejoice in the God who provided the instructions so that we can enjoy the gift of life, as the many who have followed His word.

Remember, Christmas is a season to read the instructions. You will be amazed at what you'll discover as you read and hear of the birth of the Christ child.

God bless and have a happy holiday.

Beloved post chaplain PCS's to Fort Bragg, N.C.

It's difficult to say goodbye to some people; they come into our lives, and, as unseen as a seed germinating and beginning to sprout, they grow and occupy a space in our hearts. Chap. (Lt. Col.) David Reese, post chaplain, is such an individual.

He's been the primary writer for the Chaplain's Corner column for the past three years and will be PCS-ing to Fort Bragg, N.C. His farewell luncheon was yesterday.

Chap. Reese's writing has been called inspiring, heartfelt and timely, highlighting religious customs, quotes, parables and lessons from the bible, soldier recognition, topical issues, memorial and holiday remembrances, the 9/11 disaster, and most recently, coping after Hurri-



Chaplain David Reese

cane Isabel.

He's been there for our community, quietly anticipating what we might need — mentally, emotionally and spiritually — writing to educate, inform, inspire and entertain Casemate readers.

Chap. Reese's first column upon arriving at Fort Monroe told of his, and his family's, journey here from

Monterey, Calif. In that article published Sept. 22, 2000, he said that with almost 18 years in the Army, they thought (moving) would get easier. They were driving across country — 12 days and 4,000 miles, and found it didn't get easier — "leaving good friends, a challenging assignment and a settled lifestyle."

Now, three years later, the Reese family is packed up and moving again.

We hope their "best assignment in the whole world," that was once in Monterey, will now be Fort Monroe.

But, alas, a new "best" assignment awaits them. Just as Chap. Reese trusted the potential for new opportunities and friends here, he can look forward to the future with confidence and

anticipation.

"God, in His wonderful act of springing surprises, has provided yet another opportunity to experience His eternal care for us," he said (in his first column). "In this world of transition, He remains constant and true, preceding us in every step, regardless of the circumstances."

We at Fort Monroe will miss the care and mentoring Chap. Reese has generously given us, through written word and deed.

From the Post Headquarters, Public Affairs Office and Casemate personnel, we wish Chap. Reese; his wife, Alice; and daughter, Caitlin; Godspeed and many blessings with future endeavors.

BY CONNIE SMALLS
CASEMATE EDITOR

'Letters' welcome

The "Casemate" welcomes letters to the editor, commentaries and articles on topics and issues of interest to its readership.

When appropriate, letters to the editor will be forwarded to suitable agencies for reply. The Casemate reserves the right to edit all letters for clarity, brevity and propriety. All letters are subject to review by the command.

Letters should be mailed to "Casemate," Building 27, Fort Monroe, Va. 23651-6035; or emailed to casemate@monroe.army.mil. (788-3520)

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Aviation pioneer breezes through Fort Monroe

BY DAVID J. JOHNSON
CASEMATE MUSEUM TECHNICIAN

On Sept. 7, 1900, a young mechanic from Dayton, Ohio, got off the train at Old Point Comfort, supervised the unloading of several crates and waited impatiently for a steamship to take him over to Norfolk. It is unlikely that he spent any time sightseeing at Fort Monroe, because Wilbur Wright was a man with a mission.

After staying overnight in a Norfolk hotel, Wright visited the city's lumberyards. He had assumed that he would be able to find 18-foot spruce boards to construct glider spars, but this proved to be a miscalculation. There was no spruce wood available, so he settled for 16-foot pine boards. He accompanied the wood and the crates on a train ride to Elizabeth City, North Carolina, and stored the entire load there until he could move it to its final destination.

The final leg of this journey turned out to be the most difficult. After wasting three days in Elizabeth City, Wright found a boatman willing to ferry the pine boards and himself across the Albemarle Sound to the sleepy, remote village of Kitty Hawk on the Outer Banks. There the stranger found a place to board and wrote to his brother to come on down. Orville arrived around the end of September on a more direct train route to Elizabeth City that the Wrights would use for all their future trips. This was the rather inauspicious beginning of one of the epochal events of the 20th century.

Indiana native

Wilbur Wright was born on April 16, 1867, near Millville, Indiana. His father was a bishop in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, so the family moved fairly frequently before settling permanently in Dayton. Orville was born in that city on August 19, 1871. The two brothers were always close and upon reaching adulthood, decided to go into business together. For a short time they operated a print shop and then moved into the more profitable field of bicycle repair in 1893.

The possibility of manned flight by aircraft had fascinated people for centuries and, more recently, had produced serious studies by Otto Lilienthal, Samuel Langley, Octave Chanute and others. Wilbur Wright followed this research



Photo from Dictionary of American Portraits
Wilbur Wright

closely and persuaded Orville to join him in experiments to create a man-carrying glider. The brothers designed and tested a box-kite design that appeared to succeed, but they needed a very windy location with a desolate landscape to test a full-scale model. Checking with the U. S. Weather Bureau, they found that Kitty Hawk fulfilled their requirements.

Experiments in flight

Over the next three years the Wrights devoted as much time as they could spare on their flight experiments, eventually moving their base of operations four miles north of Kitty Hawk to Kill Devil Hills, where the high sand dunes were (and still are) perfect for glider takeoffs and landings. On December 17, 1903, the brothers brought out a flimsy-looking biplane with twin propellers and a gasoline engine. Laying prone on the lower wing (there were no seats), Orville flew this craft for a distance of 120 feet. Wilbur

made the fourth and final flight of the day, covering 852 feet in 59 seconds.

That evening Orville sent a telegram to his father tersely describing the flights, ending with the words "inform Press home Christmas." The message was relayed from the Kitty Hawk Weather Station wire to Norfolk for transfer to Western Union. Apparently, the operator in Norfolk contacted a reporter for the "Virginian-Pilot" who managed to obtain more details and printed the story as the headline item of the next day's edition. The editor offered to sell this startling story to 21 other newspapers but only five bought it, and only the Cincinnati "Enquirer" thought it important enough for the front page. However, over the next few days the news spread around the country and was confirmed by photographic evidence.

Unprecedented 5-minute flight

The Wrights continued to experiment and to improve the design of their plane. In November 1904 Wilbur made an unprecedented five-minute flight around Dayton to celebrate President Theodore Roosevelt's electoral victory (the brothers were stalwart Republicans), and the following year they installed a 25-horsepower engine in their latest model. Within a short time the entire country became plane crazy: newspapers added aviation pages, Tin Pan Alley published songs about flying machines, and writers found ways to introduce aircraft into magazine stories or film scenarios.

Regrettably, Wilbur Wright did not live to witness the immense impact that air travel would have on the modern world. During a visit to Boston in April 1912 he ate some contaminated

(See PIONEER, Page 6)

Millions unite nationwide against drunk, drugged drivers

The Fort Monroe Army Substance Abuse Program (ASAP) joins with millions nationwide for National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month.

Last year 17,419 Americans died and almost a half a million were injured in impaired driving crashes. That's one death about every 30 minutes. Many were innocent victims, not the impaired drivers themselves. This is totally unacceptable, as impaired driving deaths and injuries are 100 percent preventable.

December holidays are traditionally one of the deadliest times of the year on our nation's highways, and impaired driving is a big part of the problem. To help make this year safer, ASAP has joined with other organizations around the city and country to declare December National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month and to call

for stronger policies and programs to deter impaired driving, motorcycle riding, and walking.

The theme of this year's campaign is "Take a Stand Against Impaired Driving," focusing on a safe communities approach. This emphasizes that every part of the community — the military, government, businesses, citizen groups, health-care providers, police agencies, schools, etc. — has a role to play in the fight against impaired driving.

ASAP is joining with groups in every state for National Lights On For Life Day, Dec. 19, when motorists are asked to drive with their headlights on all day to remind people about the dangers of drunk and drugged driving and in remembrance of those killed by impaired drivers.

Local police forces will also be part of the National Holiday Life-

saver Weekend, Dec. 19 through 21, when police agencies across the nation will step up enforcement efforts against impaired drivers and motorcyclists, speeders, aggressive drivers, and others who make the roads especially dangerous at this time of year.

I encourage you to join this national movement by taking your own stand against impaired driving. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has set a national goal of reducing DWI fatalities to 11,000 annually by the year 2005. That's almost 6,000 fewer than last year, and it's a rate that would reduce impaired driving fatalities to 30 percent of the total in a decade. This is an ambitious goal, one that will require all of us doing our part.

Taking a stand is simple, and there are a lot of ways to do it. First of all, don't drink and drive. Never

serve alcoholic beverages to anyone under 21. If you drink, always plan ahead and designate a non-drinking driver.

If you are having a party this holiday season, be a responsible host. Serve a wide variety of beverages, including some that are non-alcoholic. Control the amount of alcoholic beverages served at open bars. Ask alcohol-impaired guests to stay overnight or call a cab to assure them a safe ride home.

Together, we can reach our goal of decreasing DWI-related fatalities and injuries. These are tragedies that don't need to happen.

Do your part to take a stand against impaired driving this holiday season and throughout the year.

(Courtesy Bruce McFadden, Fort Monroe Army Community Service)

News clips

Post exceeds CFC goal

Fort Monroe's Combined Federal Campaign drive this year has been an overwhelming success. According to campaign manager, Paul Heilman, post's donations reached \$98,554, almost doubling the goal of \$55,000.

"I want to personally thank all who supported this important program," Heilman, director, DCFA, said. "A special 'hats off' to Sandie Turner, who coordinated the advertisement, training and collection of donations — always with a smile," he said.

(Editor's note: the TRADOC CFC drive will continue until Dec. 12. Michelle Proulx is the point of contact and can be reached at 788-3241.)

Christmas sale at thrift shop

The Fort Monroe Thrift Shop is featuring its annual Christmas sale. TSP (Thrift Shop Property) clothing, shoes, purses, linens, hardback and paperback books and red-tag items (on the first floor) are all reduced. Most prices are from 25 cents up to \$4. TSP linens are half price. Grab bags and military items are not included in the sale.

The shop will close for the Christmas holidays at 2 p.m., Dec. 12; it will reopen Jan. 13.

Normal business hours are Tuesdays and Fridays from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Consignments are accepted from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. on those days.

The public is invited to shop at the thrift store, but only authorized ID card holders can consign items. The shop is located next to the Fort Monroe Credit Union.

For more information, call 788-2566 during business hours.

Gift idea for deployed soldiers

DALLAS - AAFES "Gifts from the Homefront" program is a safe alternative to the traditional packages and letters of support that are mailed

to service members overseas. These gift certificates allow anyone to make a direct impact on the morale of deployed service members around the world by allowing a Soldier or Airman to visit an existing Base or Post Exchange to select products of their choice.

Those wishing to send a "Gift from the Homefront" can simply log on to aafes.com to purchase gift certificates in \$10 or \$20 denominations. From there, the "Gift" is sent to an individual service member (designated by the purchaser) or distributed to "any service member" through the American Red Cross, the Air Force Aid Society or Fisher House.

"Gifts from the Homefront" can be used at all AAFES locations throughout Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom (OIF/OEF). To date, AAFES operates some 48 stores throughout OIF/OEF (27 in Iraq).

Essay contest for Black History Month in February

The theme for the 2004 African American History Observance is Brown vs. Board of Education (50th Anniversary). To commemorate this landmark event in recognition of African-American/Black History Month, Fort Monroe will sponsor an essay contest.

□ Essay topic: "Discuss why the Brown case is important in our history today"

□ Who can enter: Open to all children within the Fort Monroe community

□ Categories: Grades 4-5, 6-8 and 9-12

□ Criteria: Entries must be two pages or less, double-spaced and typed or handwritten. Entries will be judged by a panel for accuracy, content, clarity and originality. Each essay must have a cover sheet, which includes the student's name, grade level, school and home telephone number.

□ Deadline: Mail or deliver entries to: Post Equal Opportunity Office, 60 Ingalls Road, ATTN: Sgt. 1st Class Selvin Walker, Building 82, Room 243, Fort Monroe, VA 23651 or email Walker at walkers@monroe.army.mil.

□ Contest runs from Dec. 8 through Jan. 16, 2004. Entries received after Jan. 16 will be disqualified.

□ Prizes: Three winners will be selected for each category: First, \$75; Second, \$50; Third, \$25.

The first place essay in each category will be read during Fort Monroe's African-American/Black History Program Feb. 5.

For more information, contact Donna Campbell, (757) 788-4721 or SFC Selvin Walker, (757) 788-3363.

SoldierRadio.com

SoldierRadio is again providing a way to let you tell Service members worldwide that you care and are thinking about them during the holidays.

You can create an Audio Post Card simply by calling 1-800-330-5090. Your recorded personalized message will be played back on www.SoldiersRadio.com.

You can record a short message (30 seconds) to friends, family members or just a random message of good will. SoldiersRadio will then take your message and put it on the radio Web cast throughout the holiday season. It works both ways ... from the field or to the service member.

AnyServiceMember.org is also promoting the call-in holiday service in hopes of reaching a large group of people who would like to send a message to Soldiers serving away from home. The cut-off date for the call in is Dec.15.

(Courtesy Army News Service)

New website: 'The Way Ahead'

WASHINGTON (Army News Service) — "The Way Ahead" website at <http://www.army.mil/thewayahead>, outlines the Army leadership's plan to increase wartime relevance and readiness and institutionalize a Joint and Expeditionary mindset. "We are accelerating change to help our Soldiers and our nation fight the current war on terrorism," said Acting Secretary of the Army Les Brownlee. The Army will reorganize its combat and institutional organizations, and redesign its formations to provide modularity and flexibility. It will also re-balance the Active and Reserve forces, and emphasize adaptability in leaders and Soldiers. "The Way Ahead" Web site mirrors a pamphlet of the same name soon to be published, officials said.

2X6 Troy
State U.

2X3 Phoe-
bus

2X3
Kecoughtan
Laundry

2X3 Photo
Pet

PROMOTION (Continued from page 1)

Command Sgt. Maj. Lionel Parker, of the institutional training shop at the Army G-3 (Operations).

That breaks down into 15,373 sergeants, 13,367 staff sergeants and 7,901 sergeants first class waiting for that important step in their careers.

Parker said the Army's operation

staff is working out details of a plan to train those soldiers waiting for school seats. That plan was announced Oct. 10 by Parker and his staff at the Pentagon.

As it stands now, units tapped for deployment will send their Soldiers to school before going and units coming back will send them

afterward, Parker said.

That plan was sent down to the command sergeants major of the Army's major commands and should be down to the battalion level, Parker said.

"This plan gives command sergeants major and commanders some authority to make decisions," Parker said.

Some of those Soldiers were actually pulled out of school before completing it so they could deploy with their units, Parker said.

Retiring Soldiers, or those leaving the Army, will depart the Army in their current rank regardless of their NCOES status, the policy also states.

The policy of conditionally promoting a Soldier to the next rank started en masse around 1992, said Edmondson. A scarcity of school seats because of congressional cut-backs on training funds penalized Soldiers, he said.

Because the Army didn't want to punish Soldiers for a lack of funds, the new policy was adopted, Edmondson explained.

The intent was to make it a temporary policy with plans for a review, he said.

Unfortunately operations in Bosnia, Haiti, Somalia and eventually Kosovo interrupted that. Sending Soldiers to a leadership course while deployed wasn't feasible,

Edmondson said.

A backlog of Soldiers waiting to attend leadership courses after their deployments started to build. Deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan have added to the backlog.

Now the policy is "back to what it was" before 1992, Edmondson. The goal of the NCOES is to get a Soldier ready for the next rank, he said.

"What does a staff sergeant need to know to become a sergeant first class?" he asked rhetorically.

Edmondson said the suspension wasn't a threat to Soldiers. In fact, he said, it could bolster them.

Sending a Soldier to a school to validate his promotion may not have been the best plan, Edmondson said.

"Why send a student to school if they're already doing that job?" he asked. In the midst of war those leaders learned how to take care of their Soldiers.

In Edmondson's opinion, it's better to go to school to learn how to do their jobs prior to being promoted to the next rank.

(Editor's note — A related article was subsequently published by Army News Service, Dec. 2. It clarifies the conditional promotion policy. Please see the article on page 16.)



Photo by Patricia Radcliffe

Best gift of all ... Felicia Long (right) collects blood from Thelma Pankoke, post headquarters, during the Nov. 12, Red Cross blood drive here. Pankoke reached a 12-gallon milestone and received a pin for the accomplishment. At a rate of one pint per donation, Pankoke has participated in 96 blood drives and has potentially helped 288 people. (A single donation of whole blood may help three to four people, according to the American Red Cross.) The next blood drive on post is set for Jan. 14, from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. at the Community Activities Center.

3X7 Va Stage Company

3X7 Ft. Monroe C. U.

Air Force-Navy combine forces to develop joint radio system

BY GERRY J. GILMORE
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Dec. 3, 2003 – The Air Force and Navy have agreed to merge their two formerly separate programs for the acquisition of improved radio systems.

The decision to combine forces in developing

the Joint Tactical Radio System — a single family of radios designed to replace incompatible units in use across the services — was made in early November, according to Air Force spokeswoman Maj. Cheryl Law.

Senior DoD leaders have hailed the initiative as a victory for jointness or interoperability among the separate armed services. Increasing

jointness across the armed forces is a key tenet of Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld’s transformation goals.

Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition, Dr. Marvin Sambur, noted in a DoD news release that combining Air Force and Navy efforts in the JTRS realm “will yield large dividends for the Navy, the Air Force and DoD in general.”

Such collaboration, Sambur continued, “will ensure that a truly joint radio system is efficiently developed for our aerospace and maritime forces.”

Working with the Air Force in developing JTRS “can assure interoperability, reduce development costs and lower acquisition costs,” John J. Young Jr., the assistant Secretary of the Navy for research, development and acquisition, noted in the release.

And, the Navy official added, “We can be certain that our war fighters will be able to easily communicate in the joint war fighting environment that Secretary Rumsfeld is creating.”

The joint Air Force-Navy initiative is expected to produce more than 17,000 units, Law noted.

She said initial deliveries of the new radios under the Air Force-Navy program are expected to occur in late 2008.

4X12 Verizon

November employee of the month

Name: Joe Hill
Directorate: DPW
Position and duties: Construction Representative
How long at current assignment: 32 months
How long in govt./military service: 27 years
Where do you live: Newport News



Joe Hill

Family: Wife – Charlotte, five children and three grandchildren
Outside activities: church, working out, playing chess and listening to music
Accomplishments: started his own company, First Look Home Inspection
Goals: acquire things, help others and enjoy life

PIONEER (Continued from Page 3)

shellfish and developed typhoid fever. This disease had almost killed his younger brother in 1896 and it snuffed out Wilbur’s life on May 30. He was 45 years old. Orville survived him by 36 years but gradually withdrew from the aircraft industry and lived quietly in Dayton. (Neither of the Wrights ever married.) During those years, the airplane—or aeroplane, as its inventors always called it—developed from a novelty to a key factor in modern warfare and the preferred mode of transatlantic travel.

In 1928 Orville took part in the dedication of a site for the Wright Memorial at Kill Devil Hills, along with aviatrix Amelia Earhart and other dignitaries. Almost a year after his death in January 1948, the Smithsonian Institution acquired the original 1903 aircraft, known as the “Kitty Hawk,” and placed it on display.

Since 1976 the “Kitty Hawk” has been housed at the National Air and Space Museum, where visitors can view this extremely fragile-looking contraption that inaugurated one of the greatest technological revolutions of the modern era.

Chapel personnel to collect hats, coats at Jingle Bell Run Dec. 12

The Chapel of Centurion's congregation is involved in two charitable events during the holiday season.

This year, the congregation collected \$5, 231.18 in offerings to assist Army Community Services in the Thanksgiving and Christmas Holiday Assistance Program. This is an annual event where members of the congregation give monies to lend a hand to soldiers and families during the holiday season.

The second event involves the Jingle Bell run, Dec. 12. Near the starting line, the Chapel Center staff will collect new or gently-used gloves, hats and coats prior to 8:30 a.m. at a van in the parking lot of the Chamberlin Hotel.

The collection point will be moved to the Bay Breeze Community Center lobby after the run commences, and will remain there until 11 a.m. that day. Collected items will be donated to HELP (Hampton Ecumenical Lodging and Provisions).

For more information, contact chapel personnel at 788-2611.

3X10 USAA



Photo by Wes Anderson



Photo by Patrick Buffett

International affair ...
Above: Col. Geoff A. Silk, dean of TRADOC's Foreign Liaison Officers, challenges local officials to "take full advantage" of LNO resources during the post's International Day observance Nov. 25 at the Bay Breeze Community Center. Left: Congressman Ed Schrock and TRADOC Commander, Gen. Kevin Byrnes, chat following the opening ceremony.

Reserve and Guard receive unlimited commissary benefits

WASHINGTON (Army News Service, Dec. 3, 2003) — The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004 granted Army Reserve and National Guard members, along with their families, unlimited access to commissaries.

Guard and Reserve members were authorized only 24 commissary shopping days per calendar year until the president signed the National Defense Authorization Act Nov. 24. The bill contained provisions eliminating the restrictions. Commissaries have immediately adopted the new provisions, which means Guard and Reserve members will no longer have to present a Commissary Privilege Card when they shop.

"Instructions have gone out to all continental U.S. stores informing them that reservists now have unlimited shopping and telling store managers how to welcome members of the National Guard and Reserve to the full use of the commissary benefit," said Patrick Nixon, deputy director of the Defense Commissary Agency. "Commissary shoppers will begin to see banners saying 'Welcome Guard and Reserve to Full Time Savings,' along with other events recognizing these new

full-time shoppers."

Nixon noted that special thanks should go to Charles Abell, principal deputy under secretary of defense for personnel and readiness. Abell acted immediately to provide interim authority for the Reserve component to have full-time commissary shopping just in time to take advantage of holiday savings.

Unlimited commissary benefits have been extended to:

- Members of the Ready Reserve (which includes members of the Selected Reserve, Individual Ready Reserve and National Guard) and members of the Retired Reserve who possess a Uniformed Services Identification Card.
- Former reserve-component members eligible for retired pay at age 60 but who have not yet attained the age of 60 and who possess a Department of Defense Civilian Identification Card.
- Dependents of the members described above who have a Uniformed Services Identification Card or who have a distinct identification card used as an authorization card for benefits and privileges administered by the Uniformed Services.

Chance meetings lead woman to volunteer opportunities

BY PATRICIA RADCLIFFE
CASEMATE STAFF WRITER

One may see a clear window or dusty white ceramics, but an artist like Raymonde Yohn sees a potential source of delight – a myriad of colors and textures.

Yohn, along with Joan Fox, have been volunteer ceramics instructors at the Fortress Frame and Craft Shop for 20 years. They have taught various aspects of the ceramics-making process, but focus on painting.

Yohn hails from Marmesse, France, a nine-family village near Chateau Villain (the Ugly Castle) where she met her husband, Clarence, who was in the Air Force. “He is from Pennsylvania, and we were stationed at Fort Sumpter in South Carolina. When it was time for final orders, we decided we wanted to retire in this area because of the weather. So, he requested (and got) orders for Langley,” she said.

They first moved to downtown Hampton, 40 years ago, but she said she felt lonely there because of the age difference between her and her neighbors. So, a friend suggested they move to Fox Hill where she met people with whom she could relate.

Friend leads Yohn to ceramics

There, she met a Canadian lady with an interesting proposition that eventually lead Yohn to her current volunteer work. “She said to me, ‘I bet you make some wonderful pate.’ I said that it’s not wonderful, but everyone says it’s good. ‘I have something I bet you’d like for your little boy’s room,’ she said, ‘come on over and look.’ I went and she had a flat (ceramic) Bugs Bunny hanging on the wall. I said that I loved it. She said, ‘what if I make you one (in exchange) for pate?’ I said ‘that sounds wonderful; yes, by all means.’

“So, I made pate and she brought me Bugs Bunny. I said, ‘where in the world do you do this?’ She told me that she made it at the Fort Monroe ceramics shop. ‘You pour it, then you fire it and you paint it,’ she said. And, I said that I’d love to do that, too, but I don’t know anything about it.”

The lady invited Yohn to join her in taking classes at the ceramics shop. “I took up ceramics, and the classes were very easy for me. I started meeting people — I love people so this is



Photo by Patricia Radcliffe

Raymonde Yohn paints fish on the window of Beth Sigler’s office (at the Community Activities Center), Nov. 7. Yohn has been a volunteer ceramics instructor at the Fortress Frame and Craft Shop for more than 20 years.

right up my alley,” Yohn said.

After taking several classes, Yohn stopped attending at one point because the death of one of her cats was difficult to come to terms with. So Myra, the ceramics shop manager, called and persuaded her to return to ceramics saying that it would make her feel better. She returned, and found that the fellowship with other craftmen, as well as the creative release, did make her feel better.

Doll making leads to life’s work

During that time, she was introduced to Joan Fox, with whom she shares many common interests including, doll making.

“We got together and started making pieces of dolls; we did that a very long time. We were taking classes and studying books on dolls all the time,” said Yohn.

We had heads, arms and legs everywhere, but nothing put together,” Fox said.

Recognizing Yohn and Fox’s skill levels, the

ceramics studio manager was anxious to see completed dolls because she wanted the two to begin teaching classes.

Volunteer recognition


“Myra said to us, I need to have a serious talk to both of you. We went in and she said ‘I think you girls need to be volunteers – you’ve been here and helped out long enough. And, as volunteers you are recognized once a year with a banquet.’ We said, oh food, okay we’ll do it.”

Since then, Yohn and Fox have been fast friends because of a mutual respect and honesty. “She always tells me if my work doesn’t look right or if I need to do a little something, and I do the same with her,” Yohn said.

Yohn and Fox teach ceramics painting classes Tuesday evenings at the Fortress Frame and Craft Shop in the Community Activities Center. They accept special painting projects, and beginning in January, they plan to teach doll-making classes.

Frame & Craft Shop open house

The Fortress Frame and Craft Shop (located in the Community Activities Center) will sponsor an open house Dec. 9 from noon to 7 p.m. Christmas goodies will be served. Drawings for three \$25 gift certificates to the shop, and a ceramic Christmas tray will be held. Also, there will be discounts on almost everything in stock including greenware, bisque and prints.



3 X 3 1/2 ECPI

3 X 3 1/2 Suburban Extended

Holiday spirit spreads across Monroe



Photo by Patrick Buffett

Col. Perry D. Allmendinger, post commander, joins the handful of Fort Monroe volunteers who traveled to the Mercury Blvd. Wal-Mart Dec. 3 to drop off 32 new bicycles for the Marine Corps' Toys for Tots program.

Post answers Toys for Tots call with 32 new bikes for charity

BY PATRICK BUFFETT
CASEMATE STAFF WRITER

The thought of a child waking up to a brand new bicycle on Christmas morning was enough to spur Shae Inglin into action.

Garnering the support of post commander, Col. Perry D. Allmendinger, the Monroe MWR employee launched a campaign in late November to accumulate as many two and three-wheelers as she could for the Marine Corps' ongoing Toys for Tots program.

"I set my sights on 50, which was pretty ambitious considering the timeframe in which we got started," Inglin said. "But, once the post heard what we're trying to do ... they came through big time."

On Dec. 3, Inglin and a small group of volunteers — to include the post commander — rolled up to the Toys for Tots drive site at the Mercury Blvd. WalMart with 32 bicycles in the back of a moving truck.

"This is such a wonderful gesture," said Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. Edward Cowell of the 4th Supply Battalion, 4th Force Service Support Group, Newport News. He and his fellow Marines were just kicking off their "Up on the Roof" campaign. At two WalMart locations in Hampton Roads, they vowed to remain up on the roof until 200 bicycles were donated to Toys for Tots.

"With generous donations like this, I'm guessing we're going to be

back down on the ground before the weekend is out," Cowell said.

Last year, the sergeant major said the Marines only accumulated about 30 bicycles locally, with drives throughout the Hampton Roads area. "So this is really huge. Bikes are right behind Nintendo as far as popularity."

Nationwide, Toys for Tots is expected to deliver over 12.9 million toys to 5.7 million children, according to the campaign's website. Local figures were not available. "I expect the need will be pretty big this year because of the losses a lot of families suffered during Hurricane Isabel," Cowell said.

Following the delivery from Fort Monroe, Allmendinger also alluded to the hardships of Isabel. "This was just one more way that we felt we could help," the colonel said. "And this is extra special considering it's for the kids. I just hope it brings a lot of joy on Christmas morning."

Asked if he remembered his first bicycle, Allmendinger said "nobody forgets that."

"I got my first bike when I was six," he said. "It was a Stingray with a banana seat ... I loved that bike."

There is still ample opportunity to make a Toys for Tots donation. Drop boxes for new, unwrapped toys are located in most malls and department stores, as well as military exchanges and office buildings like the headquarters here at Monroe.



Photo by Patricia Radcliffe



Photo by Patrick Buffett

Post welcomes holidays with decorations, tree lighting ceremony

Photo above: Todd Smith, a contract worker with Griffin Services, adds Christmas lights to the highest branches of an evergreen outside post headquarters Nov. 24. Above right: Frank Johnson, also with Griffin Services, adds a bit of holiday color to a lamp post in front of Craven Army Health Clinic Dec. 1. Photo right: Electrician Antonio Moore assembles lighted holiday sculptures at Cannon Park near post headquarters Dec. 1. All of the holiday decorations were completed in time for the post tree-lighting ceremony planned for Dec. 4. In his prepared remarks for the event, Col. Perry D. Allmendinger, post commander, spoke of the "spark of mankind — that which propels us to embrace the peoples of every friendly nation." Referring to the height of the post Christmas tree, he said it's "symbolic of the many obstacles we continue to rise above — be it the direct hit of a category two hurricane or the senseless 9-11 deaths of thousands who will keep their place in our hearts even in these times of celebration and joy." The ceremony concluded with an appearance by Santa Claus, who handed out candy and posed for photographs with children.



Photo by Patricia Radcliffe

Community invited to holiday activities

All military and civilian personnel and their families are invited to take part in the post's holiday activities to promote good fellowship and cheer. Mark your calendars for these events:

● **Holiday Decorating Contest**, Dec. 10, for quarters and offices. Awards will be presented at a community breakfast on Dec. 12. To participate, call 788-5962 or email searchless@monroe.army.mil by Dec. 8.

● **Jingle Bell Run/Walk/ Breakfast with Santa**, 8:30 a.m., Dec. 12, starting at Continental Park/gazebo and ending at the Bay Breeze Community Center.

Fort Monroe-wide participation is encouraged. Sleighs are permitted in the fun run/walk. Festive dress is encouraged. Prizes will be awarded for the best sleigh representing the spirit of the season. Breakfast costs \$3.50 per person. Pay at the door. Kids age 4 and under eat free. Phone 788-5962.

● **The U.S. Continental Army Band** will perform three Holiday Celebration concerts. The concerts will be held at Norfolk's Harrison Opera House, Dec. 12 at 7 p.m.; and at the post theater, Dec. 13 at 2 and 8 p.m.

The concerts will feature the Concert Band, Jazz Band, the popular music ensemble "Cross-fire" and the Old Dominion University Concert Choir.

The concerts are free and open to the public. Tickets can be obtained by going online to www.tradoc.army.mil/band and clicking on "free tickets" or by sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to The U.S. Continental Army Band, ATTN: Tickets, 10 Bernard Road, Fort Monroe, VA, 23651. Please specify performance and number of tickets requested (limit 6). Guests with tickets are encouraged to arrive early. Unclaimed seats will be open to non-ticket holders 15 minutes prior to show time.

For more information, call 788-3620.

Letters to Santa

Hey kids! The Fort Monroe Fire Department has a direct line to Santa. Drop your letters to Santa Claus in the specially marked box in front of the Fire Department by Dec. 20, and they will go directly to the North Pole.

Don't forget to put your name and return address on the letter.



Photo by Patrick Buffett

A heart of gold ... Representatives of the Military Order of the Purple Heart, Chapter 607, present a \$500 holiday donation to Command Sgt. Maj. Anthony Browning, post CSM, at the Army Community Service Center here Nov. 25. Each year, the order raises the funds primarily through private donations to benefit lower enlisted military members during the holidays. Pictured from left to right are: Daniel F. McNeil, Pete Fairchild, Browning, George Charity and Bill Wilson. Also present for the ceremony but not pictured was Warren Landes, a two-time Purple Heart recipient.



Photo by Patricia Radcliffe

Artistic expression ... Caitlin Smith, left, and Sarah Paden are among the middle schoolers at the Monroe Community Activities Center who took part in a special craft project Nov. 25 to benefit nearby Riverside Convalescent Home. The youths created holiday artwork for the residents' doors at the home. More than 70 pieces of artwork have been completed thus far. The CAC participants have been performing community service for Riverside for four years, according to Renee Hockaday, middle school program director. The convalescent home also donated \$100 to the post youth program to help replace some of the supplies lost during Hurricane Isabel.

Sports & Health

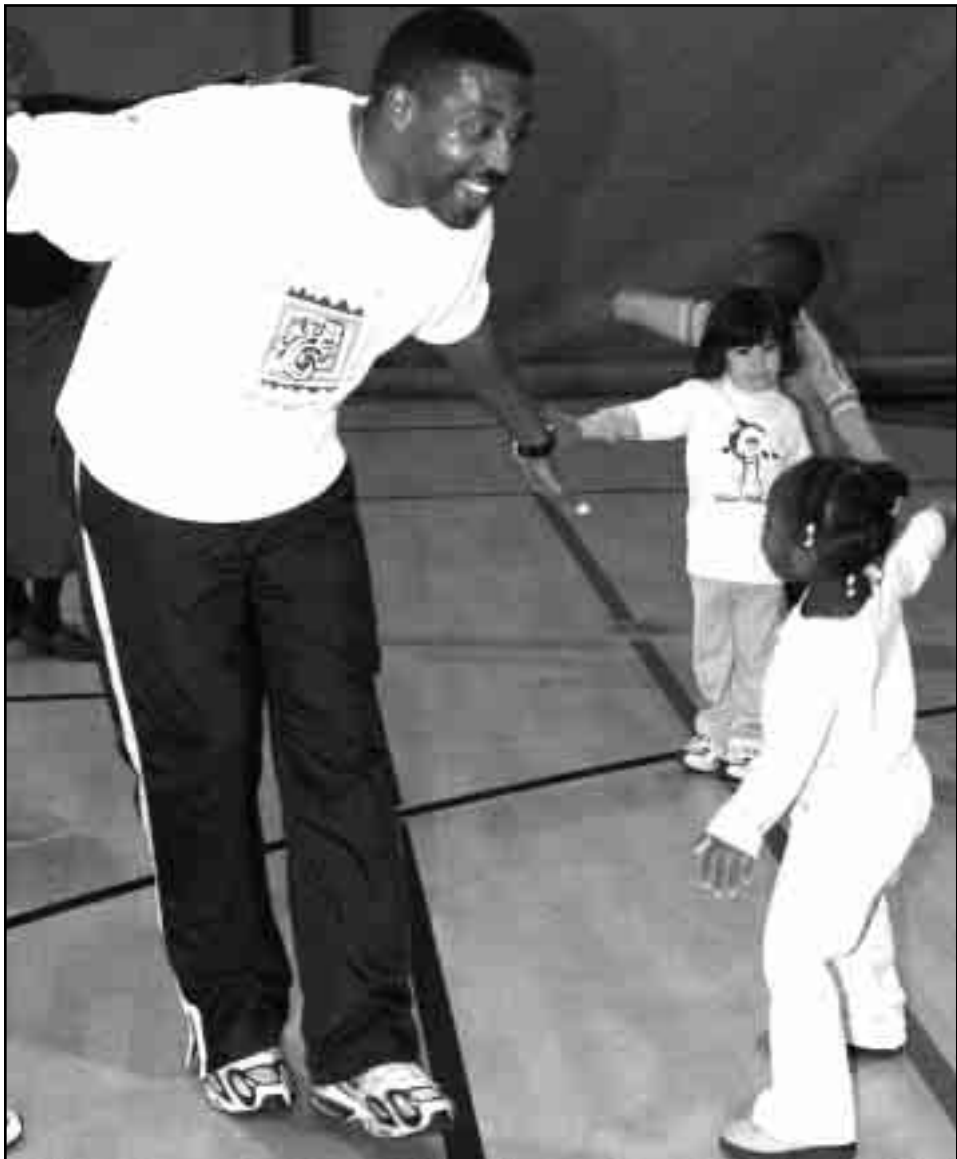


Photo above: Mike Jones, Youth Sports Director, motivates participants of the Pre-school 1 fitness outreach class Dec. 2 at the Community Activities Center. **Photo right:** Gionni Terrell (front, right) and Ciera Houston (to Terrell's right) get a jump ahead of the pack in a race across the gym floor during the Dec. 2 fitness session.



Post youth sports, CDC team up to keep tots fit

BY PATRICK BUFFETT
CASEMATE STAFF WRITER

Mention "mornings with Mr. Mike" to the youngsters attending Preschool I and II classes at the Fort Monroe Child Development Center and you're sure to receive an enthusiastic response.

"They go nuts. It's one of the high points of their week," said Judy Gibbons, lead caregiver for Preschool 1, comprised of all 3-year-olds. "Parents tell us the kids always seem in a hurry Tuesday mornings — they don't want to be late for Mr. Mike's class."

All of the excitement is over Mike Jones, youth sports and fitness director, and his CDC outreach program that stresses fitness, fun and sportsmanship. Two

45-minute sessions are conducted once a week at the Community Activities Center.

"We've been doing this for about three years now," said Jones, who had just wrapped up a Dec. 2 aerobics session with the 3-year-olds. They were now running about the gym, chasing down large rubber balls only to give them another kick or throw to start the pursuit over again.

"This program is similar to 'Start Smart' offered by the Boys and Girls Club of America, the organization we're partnered with," Jones said. "The goal is to help the kids develop large and small motor skills — the eye-hand and eye-foot coordination they

(See YOUTH, Page 13)



Photo left: Doris Santiago and Preschool 1 caregiver Wanda Gillis swing to the music during the fitness outreach class Dec. 2 at the Community Activities Center. **Photo above:** Gionni Terrell shows how loud he can roar during the warm-up portion of the fitness class.



'Top ten' trophies ... Col. Perry D. Allmendinger, post commander, center, receives the first place trophies won by Fort Monroe runners during the annual Army 10-miler held in Washington, D.C. during October. Representing the winning teams are, from l-r, Karen Sain, Tom Ray, Cynthia Carpenter, Dale Abrahamson, Don Wagner, John Carper, P. Giraud-Charreyron and John DiCarlo. The trophies will remain on display in the trophy case just inside the entrance to Bldg. 77.

Photo by Patrick Buffett

Youth (Continued from Page 12)

exercise when they're kicking or catching a ball, for instance."

A rubber ball is pushed in Jones' direction. A not-so-shy little boy pleads, "throw it, throw it!" Jones complies, drawing a broad smile from the tot just before he speeds off in pursuit of the object.

"Another big difference you notice over time is increased social skills," Jones said. "I know that's an important part of the overall CDC program; helping these youths learn how to cooperate with one another and how to follow rules.

"So we support that by playing a lot of organized sports like basketball, soccer and kickball," he said. "And we do a lot of role playing to help them express their creativity and interact with one another."

All in all, when they head for a kindergarten classroom, the kids who are part of such a well-rounded program tend to have an easier time adapt-

ing to the new environment, according to Gibbons.

"Balancing classroom time with 'outdoor' activities is also an important part of

the CDC program," Gibbons said. "So this program helps us accomplish that as well, especially during these colder months when we spend less

time outdoors."

Minutes later, Gibbon was bundling up her charges in hats, mittens and winter jackets. The session was over and, as the

children filed out, Jones echoed "see you next week" to repeated shouts of "bye Mr. Mike!"

"What better way is there to start a day?"

he said. "This gets my energy level up as well, and there is nothing better than sharing the excitement these kids have for this program."

Sports Shorts

New bowling league

A new league is being formed to begin play on Wednesday evenings starting Jan. 7 at the Fort Monroe Bowling Center.

Each team will consist of three adults — male and female. All military, DoD employees and their families are eligible.

For information or to sign up, call Chuck McIntyre at 788-2939.

Striped bass championship

The Striped Bass World Championship is underway in Virginia Beach, and the \$25,000 state record striper has yet to be caught.

The standing record, set in 1996, is 61 pounds, 12 ounces

Register via the internet at: striped-bassworldchampionship.com.

5 X 12
SUNCOM

Moat notes

‘Sonshine’ Singers

The Sonshine Singers (a post-wide children’s choir – grades 2-6) will perform the musical, Once Upon a Time in Bethlehem, on Dec. 14 at 6 p.m. at the Chapel of the Centurion. The concert is free and is an opportunity for soldiers and family members to hear the story of Christmas told through song.

Refreshments will follow.
For more information, contact the chapel office at 788-2611.

Christmas service

The annual German Christmas Service will be celebrated at the Chapel of the Centurion, Dec. 15, at 6 p.m. The public is invited. For more information about the service, call the German Liaison Office, Sgt. Maj. Lieske at 788-3639/2703.

Free Nutcracker performances

The Virginia Ballet Theatre presents The Nutcracker with special on-base performances. Join Clara and her Nutcracker Prince on their enchanted journey through a land of sweets for this holiday classic in the Little Creek Amphibious Base Theatre, Dec. 5 at 7 p.m. and Dec. 6 at 2 and 7 p.m.

Free tickets are available now at the ITT office. Contact Jennifer H. Baden at 622-4822 or www.virginiaballettheatre.com for more information.

School Age Services Winter Camp

Winter Camp is available at School Age Services for youth in grades 1 through 5 from Dec. 22 to Jan. 2. Activities include swimming, bowling, arts and crafts, cooking, games, science and a New Year’s Eve party. Field trips to the movie theater, Coleman’s Nursery, Plaza Roller Rink, CiCi’s Pizza, Dollar Tree and more, have been scheduled. Operating hours are 7 a.m. - 6 p.m. Breakfast, lunch and a snack will be served. Cost is \$15 per day (includes some field trips). Children must be registered with Child and Youth Services. Contact Donna Ballance at 788 3957 or 2343 for more information.

1-2-3 Magic Workshops

In January, the Soldier and Family Support Center will present two workshops featuring the childhood discipline program, 1-2-3 Magic. This award-winning parenting program provides no-nonsense methods for disciplining children between the ages of 2 and 12. It also presents ways to encourage children to start doing the things their parents want them to do. Each participant who completes the program will receive a copy of the best-selling book, 1-2-3 Magic.

The first 1-2-3 Magic workshop

will consist of two, two-hour sessions from 9 - 11 a.m. on Jan. 7 and 14 in the Soldier and Family Support Center classroom. Limited free childcare is available at the Child Development Center during these sessions and must be requested at the time of registration.

The second workshop will be presented during three brown-bag lunch sessions from 11:45 a.m. - 12:45 p.m. on Jan. 15, 22 and 29 in the Soldier and Family Support Center Classroom. Light refreshments will be provided.

The workshops are open to active duty service members, family members, DA civilians and retirees. To register or obtain additional information, contact Anne Shanks, Family Advocacy Program Educational Specialist, at 788-3511/3878 or shanksap@monroe.army.mil.

The Soldier and Family Support Center is located on post in Quar- ters 1, 151 Bernard Road.

Holiday films at Williamsburg Library

To celebrate the winter holiday season, the Williamsburg Regional Library is holding a free holiday film festival. Every Tuesday afternoon throughout December, between 2 and 4 p.m., classic Christmas movies will be shown in the Williamsburg Library Theatre, 515 Scotland Street. Reservations are not required and admission is free. Call (757) 259-4050 for more information.

The movies to be shown are:

- Dec. 2 - White Christmas
- Dec. 9 - The Preacher’s Wife
- Dec. 16 - A Christmas Story
- Dec. 23 - A Christmas Carol
- Dec. 30 - Miracle on 34th Street

Technology Expo 2003

A Fort Monroe technology exposition will be held Dec. 11 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Bay Breeze Community Center, Building 185. Various exhibitors will demonstrate the latest in IT Solutions, information sharing, integration solutions, homeland security, audio-visual display technology, teleconferencing systems, enterprise management, task order programs, hardware/software and much more!

All Army, DoD, contractor, and tenant activity personnel are invited at no fee. There will also be complimentary refreshments and free giveaways (while supplies last).

Newport News Library December programs

Newport News Public Libraries will close at 1 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 24. The libraries will also be closed all day Thursday and Friday, Dec. 25 and 26. December programs include the following.

- Make a winter holiday craft, Bailey Library, 2-4 p.m., Dec. 6

- Make two holiday ornaments - one for the library tree and one to take home. Registration is ongoing.

- Tree Trimming Storytime for ages 3 - 8, Virgil I. Grissom Library, 3-4:30 p.m., Dec. 13

- Hear holiday stories and make decorations for the Grissom Library tree. Registration is ongoing.

- Tree Trimming Craft and Storytime, Main Street Library, 2 p.m., Dec. 13.

Listen to holiday stories and songs and make ornaments to decorate the Main Street Library tree. Registration is ongoing.

- Happy Kwanzaa, Bailey Library, 2-4 p.m., Dec. 20. Learn the seven principles of Kwanzaa, called the Nguzo Saba. Listen to the story of the seven spools of thread and make an mkeka mat. Registration is ongoing.

For more information, contact Sacil Armstrong, Programs and Information Coordinator, City of Newport News Department of Libraries at sarmstrong@nngov.com or 926-1357 or visit the library’s web site at www.nngov.com/library.

British and American Folk Songs at the Williamsburg Library

Virginia singer, Mary Smith, performs traditional Irish, Scottish, English and American ballads, deftly weaving history and storytelling into her music. She is praised for her ability to delve into the essence of a song and draw in the listener. She will perform as part of the Dewey Decibel Concert series at the Williamsburg Library Theatre on Dec. 13 at 8 p.m.

Tickets for the concert are \$12 for adults, \$10 for students (with ID) and \$6 for those under 16. They can be reserved by calling (757) 259-4070. The Williamsburg Library Theatre is located at 515 Scotland Street, two blocks north of Merchants Square and the College of William and Mary.

Contact Patrick Golden, Program Services Director, at (757) 259-4071 or visit the library’s web site at www.wrl.org.

Holiday Concert at the Constant Center

On Dec. 12 at 8 p.m., there will be a holiday concert featuring Al Jarreau, Melissa Manchester, and David Benoit teamed-up with the Peanuts Gang for the second installment of the Virginia Symphony Spotlight series.

Tickets start at \$35 and can be purchased at the Constant Center box office, all Ticketmaster outlets, on-line at ticketmaster.com, or by calling 671-8100. For more information, contact Kristie Shields at 683-6542 or ksields@odu.edu.

Courthouse Galleries celebration

The Courthouse Galleries will hold a reception from 6 to 8 p.m. Dec. 12 for the opening of Cross Currents. This exhibit features a diverse collection of cultural stories from such distant locales as the Brazilian rainforest of South America to Europe, Asia, Africa and the United States. Cross Currents, which will remain on view through Feb. 8, 2004, features paintings, sculpture, fiber and mixed media installations by artists Maria Barbosa, Nick Cave, Rieneke Leenders, Linda Gissen and Richard Ward.

The Courthouse Galleries, located at the corner of Court and High Streets in historic Olde Towne Portsmouth, are open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and 1 to 5 p.m. on Sundays. Admission is \$3, but is free on the first Sunday of every month. Visit www.courthousegalleries.com or call 757-393-8543 for information.

Halley’s Comet hits the American Theatre

John Amos, star of the West Wing, Roots, Die Hard and Good Times, comes to the American Theatre in his own one man show, Halley’s Comet Dec. 12 to 14. For tickets, call the theatre box office at 722-2787 or order online at www.theamericantheatre.com. Show times are Dec. 12 and 13 – 8 p.m. and Dec. 14 – 2:30 p.m. Ticket prices are \$30 or \$35 with discounts for students, seniors and military personnel.

Editors please note: Visit Amos and this production online at www.halleyscomet.com.

At the Movies

Showing at the
Langley Air Force Base Theater

Friday, Dec. 5

7 p.m. - The Texas Chainsaw
Massacre (R)

Saturday, Dec. 6

2 p.m. - Kill Bill (R)

Saturday, Dec. 6

7 p.m. - In the Cut (R)

Friday, Dec. 12

7 p.m. - Mystic River (R)

Saturday, Dec. 13

2 p.m. - Brother Bear (G)

Saturday, Nov. 29

7 p.m. - Scary Movie 3 (PG-13)

All movies at 7 p.m. unless otherwise noted

Adults – \$2; Children 6 – 12 years old –
\$1.50; and Children under 6 – free.
(If a child under 6 occupies a seat at a G-
rated movie, admission is \$1.50.)
Special movie showings are available.

Future uniforms offer new capabilities, less weight

BY DONNA MILES

AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE

WASHINGTON, Dec. 2, 2003 — They call it the “Christmas tree” effect. Defense engineers come up with the latest new gadgets and gizmos to help troops on the battlefield, and — just like ornaments being added to the holiday tree — they “hang” them on the warfighter.

As a result, troops frequently carry a full combat load of 75, 100 or even 150 pounds.

“What warfighters are carrying today is just ridiculous,” said Robert Kinney, director of the Individual Protection Directorate at the U.S. Army Soldier Systems Center at Natick, Mass. “Our challenge is to provide greater protections and capabilities, but with less weight and bulk.”

Kinney and an army of engineers and researchers at the center, which conducts research and development for all the military services, is committed to reducing the load being carried by service members — while making them safer and more formidable on the battlefield.

Their goal, he said, is to incorporate new, lighter-weight materials to reduce troop loads by almost half, to 50 pounds or less.

At the same time, Natick engineers are exploring advanced technologies that will give warfighters of the future capabilities once thought restricted to the fictitious

Power Rangers, Terminator and Contra series characters.

Tomorrow’s warfighters, Kinney said, will wear uniforms with built-in chemical-biological protection, embedded with electric wires and fiber optics that give sophisticated battlefield capabilities. Uniforms will be waterproof and flame-resistant, with built-in insect repellent, antibacterial agents that help stop open injuries from getting infected, and even antimicrobial agents that keep odor in check. New synthetic materials being explored will make the uniforms warmer in cold environments, cooler in hot ones, and lighter in weight and bulk.

In addition, uniforms of the future will enable troops to adapt quickly to changing conditions. They’ll change color, chameleon-style, to reflect the surrounding environment. Boots will come with snap-on soles for different terrains and removable liners that can be replaced when they get wet.

Headgear will take on a whole new dimension, protecting against ballistic and fragmentation while serving as the wearer’s personal “control center.”

Tomorrow’s helmets will integrate thermal sensors, video cameras, and chemical and biological sensors. They’ll include a visor that can act as a “heads-up display monitor” equivalent to two 17-inch computer monitors in front of the wear-

er’s eyes. And powering all the warfighter’s gear will be a single battery, capable of running 24 hours or longer before being recharged.

As futuristic as these technologies may sound, many are being incorporated into the Army’s Objective Force Warrior — which LeeAnn Barkhouse, business liaison for the program, describes as a “system of systems” being developing for warfighters in 2010 and beyond.

The program is expected to become a prototype for all the military services, she said.

Barkhouse said Objective Force Warrior introduces a far-ranging array of new capabilities, many of them embedded directly into the warfighter’s uniform to reduce the heavy, cumbersome add-ons that have evolved over time. And unlike the current combat load, which imposes immense weights on the warfighter’s back and shoulders, Barkhouse said the new system will center its lighter load at the body’s strongest point: the waist and hips.

Gone will be the “Christmas tree effect.” In its place, she said, will be a system that works with, rather than against, the warfighter’s body — and offers almost unimaginable new capabilities. “It represents a tremendous advance,” Barkhouse said.



Photo courtesy of U.S. Army Soldier Systems Center
The Objective Force Warrior program offers a glimpse into advances planned for warfighters in 2010 and beyond. The program is expected to become a prototype for all the military services.

Finances top priority for Army Family Action Plan

BY VICTORIA PALMER

ALEXANDRIA, Va. (Army News Service, Dec. 1, 2003) — Personal financial concerns are this year’s top priority for Soldiers and their families, according to the votes of 103 delegates to the 2003 Army Family Action Plan Conference. All the top five new AFAP issues directly relate to pay benefits and personal expenses.

Survivor Benefit Plan offset headed the list of new issues—ahead of mortgage relief for mobilized reserve-component service members and death benefits for stillborn infants (tied for second), lodging and subsistence for family members of hospitalized service members and weight allowance for permanent change of station moves.

During the 20th annual Department of the Army AFAP conference Nov. 17-21 in Alexandria, Va., delegates representing every demographic segment of the Army worked in eight groups addressing 24 issues in areas such as family support, force support, logistical support, employment, entitlements and medical/dental.

Each work group elected a spokesperson to brief out its top three issues at week’s end to an audience of senior Army leaders that included Vice Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. George W. Casey Jr. and his wife Sheila; Reginald J. Brown, assistant secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs; Lt. Gen. James J. Lovelace, director of the Army Staff, and his wife Gail; Lt. Gen. Roger Schultz, director of the Army National Guard; Brig. Gen. James Snyder (who represented Lt. Gen. James R. Helmly, chief of the Army Reserve) and Mrs. Helmly; and the conference host, Brig. Gen. Robert L. Decker, U.S. Army Community and Family Support Cen-

ter commander.

After all the issues were briefed, delegates voted for the top five from the conference, the six most critical active AFAP issues and the most valuable community services.

Help for surviving spouses #1

Help for surviving spouses of retirees was the focus of the # 1 issue: Survivor Benefit Plan offset. Spokesperson Tracey Dougherty, Fort Polk, La., explained that SBP, a voluntary, annuity-type plan paid monthly by military retirees, provides 55 percent of the service member’s retirement pay to the surviving spouse when Social Security is not yet payable and a 35 percent benefit when it is (at age 62). The age of receipt for maximum Social Security benefits has increased but the SBP offset remains at age 62. The Entitlements I work group recommended delay of the start of the second-tier level of SBP benefits from age 62 to 72 and increasing the level of benefits from 35 to 40 percent.

Mortgage relief, death benefits for stillborn infants: tie for 2nd

Entitlements II spokesperson Capt. Chris Moore, Fort Jackson, S.C. made impassioned pleas for his work group’s issues through compelling storytelling, of which two resulted in a tie for the #2 new issue: mortgage relief for mobilized reservists and death benefits for stillborn infants.

Moore explained that approximately one-third of mobilized reserve-component service members suffer a significant decrease in pay, which impacts their ability to meet mortgage obligations. The work group made the recommendation

that the Soldiers and Sailors Civil Relief Act be amended to allow Soldiers to defer the difference between the existing mortgage obligation on the family’s primary residence and the Basic Allowance for Housing for the duration of mobilization.

In briefing death benefits for stillborn infants, Moore illustrated the issue with an emotional comparison of two families experiencing the joy of pregnancy and birth but which then undergo the heartbreaking loss of a child. But while a child who dies even shortly after birth is covered under Family Supplemental Group Life Insurance, a stillborn child is not, compounding the Soldier’s and family’s emotional trauma with financial hardship. The work group recommended that this could be addressed by changing the FSGLI to include a death benefit for stillborn infants.

Dougherty also briefed the #4 issue: lodging and subsistence for family members of hospitalized service members. Current policy authorizes transportation costs for two family members when a Soldier is hospitalized. Dougherty explained that Congress has authorized per diem for families of Soldiers injured in Operations Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, but when a Soldier is seriously ill or injured in circumstances other than war, family members must incur the costs of lodging and food expenses. The work group recommended travel and per diem be provided to families of all Soldiers hospitalized with serious illness or injury.

Facilities and Relocation spokesperson Maj. Nora Marcos, Yongsan, Korea, whose husband is

(See AFAP, Page 16)

Conditional promotion policy clarified

(Editor's note — This is a follow-up article to the promotion story on page 1.)
BY SPC. BILL PUTNAM

WASHINGTON (Army News Service, Dec. 2, 2003) — The Army News Service article posted on Nov. 25 on the conditional promotion policy being rescinded prompted a lot of questions from Soldiers in the field.

“Can a specialist be conditionally promoted to sergeant with the new changes coming up?” asked Spc. Mitchell Bosch, a Soldier in the Hawaii-based 65th Engineer Battalion, via an e-mail to Army News Service.

Other Soldiers around the Army have emailed or called Army News Service asking the same question.

They can be promoted, said Sgt. Maj. Julian Edmondson, the personnel policy integrator at the Pentagon's G-1 staff.

Under a new policy dated Oct. 10, the Army will stop all conditional promotions from sergeant to sergeant first class after Jan. 1.

Here's how the new policy will look:

— A sergeant has to graduate from the Primary Leadership Development Course to be considered for promotion to staff sergeant.

— A staff sergeant has to graduate from

the Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course to be considered for promotion to sergeant first class.

— A sergeant first class had to graduate from the Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Course to be considered for promotion to master sergeant.

The only exception to the new policy was conditional promotion from specialist or corporal to sergeant. They don't need to attend PLDC to be promoted, Edmondson said.

In fact, the requirement for a specialist or corporal to complete Primary Leadership Development Course within one year of promotion has been waived too, Edmondson said.

“Now there is no (noncommissioned officer education system) requirement for PLDC,” Edmondson said.

Under the old policy, a Soldier promoted to sergeant had to finish PLDC within one year to keep the rank. That's changed, Edmondson said. A Soldier promoted to sergeant doesn't need PLDC at all to keep the rank but will need it for consideration for staff sergeant, he said.

“Before they had to go to keep it. But not now,” Edmondson said.



In Memory ... A tree was planted by the Fort Monroe Military Police Nov. 20, to create a living memorial for Monte Xavier Neal, Jr., the stillborn son of Sgt. Monte (l) and Melissa Neal. Provost Marshal, Capt. Kelly Weinberg (r) and Neal participated in the solemn ceremony and Chap. Reese provided remarks and blessings.

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an Army lieutenant colonel, briefed the #5 issue: weight allowance for Permanent Change of Station moves. Marcos explained that failure to review and adjust weight allowances has resulted in the application of out-of-date weight tables that have not increased since the 1980s, resulting in Soldiers having to dispose of personal items or paying out of pocket to cover moving expenses. The work group recommended weight allowances periodically be reviewed and adjusted based on modern-day households.

Affordable continuing education

for family members continues to remain a hot issue, as delegates voted for the top six critical active issues introduced into the AFAP process in preceding conferences.

Allowing all Soldiers with at least 10 years of service to distribute their Montgomery GI Bill benefits to their dependents was voted the top active issue, followed by in-state college tuition status for military family members, which was the number one 2002 AFAP conference new issue. This would allow for military family members residing in a state on military orders for

the last and current duty assignment to be eligible for in-state tuition and to retain in-state tuition status once established.

In-state tuition status tied with pay table reform for second in the top six critical active issues, followed by modification of the Permanent Change of Station weight allowance table, retirement Dislocation Allowances and shipment of household goods.

This year's delegates identified the most valuable services as medical/dental, the Army Family Action Plan, Army Community Service and the commissary.

The Army Family Action Plan grassroots process has identified issues affecting Soldiers' and families' lives to the Army senior leadership level since 1983. Over the past 20 years, AFAP has raised more than 542 issues resulting in 82 changes to legislation, 130 revised policies and 140 improved programs or services. AFAP successes include the Military Thrift Savings Plan

that allows military members to participate in the Federal Thrift Savings Plan; TRICARE for Life, which extends TRICARE eligibility to military Medicare-eligibles; tour stabilization for Soldiers with high school seniors; and uniform DoD reserve-component family member identification cards.

“We find ourselves in the AFAP 20th year, supporting an Army at war,” said Casey. “At no time in my recent memory has a program like AFAP been more important to the overall success of our Army.”

AFAP is a family support program of the U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center in Alexandria, Va., and is one of more than 50 programs CFSC provides for Soldiers and families worldwide. Further information is available at the Army MWR Web site at www.armymwr.com.

(Editor's note: Victoria Palmer is the deputy public affairs officer for CFSC.)

3X5 Fla. Institute

3X3 Coastal